

WATER RESOURCES - LICENCE FEES

468. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Are people who obtain water from surface water sources required to pay licence fees similar to those being imposed on licensed bore owners?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) Are marron classed as a farm stock with regard to these licence fees?
- (4) Why are bores for livestock watering exempt from the new licence fees but licensed bores for aquaculture such as marron farming are not exempt?
- (5) If licence fees are only for administration costs, why is there such a marked difference in fee amounts depending on the entitlement classes?
- (6) Why is there an annual fee rather than an up-front fee to cover the period of the individual licence?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank Hon Murray Criddle for providing some notice of the question. I am advised in the following terms -

- (1) All licensed water use - that is, groundwater and surface water in proclaimed areas greater than that needed for domestic purposes, which is 1 501 kilolitres - is required to pay a water licence administration fee.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Stock and intensive conditions are defined under section 21(4) of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914. The legislation provides for self-sufficiency and the rearing of stock for private use. Marron stock is not classed as stock to enable self-sufficiency under the intent of the act.
- (4) Groundwater bores are exempt from licensing under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 for domestic purposes, domestic garden, and stock watering purposes. Domestic use from surface water sources also does not require licensing as a riparian right is implied under section 9 of the act. A riparian right includes an owner or occupier of the land using water for watering cattle or other stock other than those being raised under intensive conditions, as defined in section 21(4) of the act. Marron stock is not considered in line with the intent of the riparian right.
- (5) The annual fee structure was determined from the amount of effort required to administer licences with different water entitlements. It is more complex and time consuming to manage a water licence with a large water entitlement than a smaller one, and the range of fees reflects this.
- (6) When a water licence is issued, several processes continue to occur, including compliance checking against licence condition, maintaining licensing databases, managing appeals and community awareness.